

## Ambiance

### The other transport.

Besides city buses, inter-city buses, cars, and motorcycles, there is a popular, low cost mode of transport: the bicycle.

Tegucigalpa's steep hills discourage bike use, but in flatter parts of the countryside it is very popular. La Ceiba's abundance of cyclists reminds one of China, especially when factories let out, and dense flocks of bicycles commandeer the sides of the streets.

Bikes are usually the old-and-clunky variety. It is amazing to see the apparent ease with which people use them, pumping along resolutely on rocky, dusty, dirt roads under blazing heat. (Folks do enjoy pedaling during morning and evening hours when motorists have trouble seeing them!). Of course, cyclists use no lights, reflectors, or light-colored or reflective clothing. It is common, especially on mountain grades, to see cyclists "hitching" a ride by resolutely grasping the back of a truck laboring uphill.

I am awed to see what people can do on bikes here: A man transports a wife with a shopping bag and two or three children; a first-grader confidently carries two younger siblings on the bar along the edge of a busy highway; a mother balances her infant in front of her; a man grasps a computer under one arm, or a long bundle of metal reinforcement rods—ends bouncing vigorously up and down—over his shoulder. What skill!

I even saw (instead of a delivery van) a Bakery Bike! Along with a sizeable basket on the handle-bars, an extended platform over the back wheel accommodated a large box crammed full of bread. The platform also bristled with wooden dowels densely hung with layers of plastic bags of bread.

# February 08<sub>/yr. 2</sub>

## in Honduras

– Janet Alcántara

*"Extend hospitality to strangers." –Romans 12:13*

Well--so much for travelling less: this month I was out of town every weekend, including *two* visits to the Lake communities and one to the groups in and around La Ceiba!

February also brought visitors, many never met before. A group from the New England synod arrived in San Pedro Sula and I interpreted for them as they visited our churches there and met with their leaders.



*Above, Minnesotans worship at the El Señor es Nuestro Pastor congregation in Tegucigalpa. Below, doña Elia from the Buen Samaritano house church in Bacadía.*

A team from NE Minnesota hosted their twice-annual theological/liturgical conference here which is their contribution to the spiritual growth of the leadership in the Lutheran Church in Honduras. I delighted in leading worship (including a model mini-Easter Vigil), and acting in a drama, besides interpreting. Our participants' evaluations were most heartening!

An unexpected phone call alerted me to the fact that the son of Elia, from the woman's group I work with in Bacadía (one of the Lake communities) was in intensive care in a hospital here in Tegucigalpa following an auto crash. After wandering the hospital for an hour, I finally located the patient and his family. We prayed together, and then I prayed with the young man. Next day, the ex-



hausted family came to supper. The following morning—after staying up all night at the hospital—two of the family gave in and came to take advantage of my guestroom bed. Despite five days in intensive care, the young man is finally on the way to recovery. Thanks be to God for this new chance at life! Pray for Valentín, Elia, and their family.

In faith and service in Christ,

*--janet*

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